

To the Chairman and Members of the Northampton Rural District Council.

12TH JANUARY, 1910.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Report with the usual tables for the year 1909. For reasons I have previously given I consider the population of the district to be stationary. Very little building is going on except at Duston, and I estimate that to be sufficient to counteract the deficiency that existed at the time of the last census.

The total number of births during the year was 122. This is a very small number, and during the last ten years it has only once been lower—in 1907, when there were 107 births. The average for the last ten years has been 140 births. During the last five years the births have all been under 140, so that recently there has been a great decrease in the birth rate, which works out this year at only 19 per 1000, the average being 22. Of these births 58 were males and 64 females.

The total number of deaths in children under one year of age was only 4, so that if fewer children were born it is satisfactory to know that almost all of them lived. This is the smallest number of deaths under this heading that I ever remember. In 1906 and 1907 there were only six such deaths, and the average for the ten years works out at 98 per 1000 births registered, whilst this year it is only 33, or just over 3 per cent. I doubt if any amount of sanitary work will bring about a lower death rate in this class than the present one. Of these deaths two were due to atrophy and two to diseases of the respiratory organs, so that it is also satisfactory to find that none of them were due to preventable causes such as diarrhoea or infectious disease. The total number of deaths at all ages for the whole district was 147, giving a ratio per 1000 of 23; the average for the last ten years being 25. Of these deaths, however, 88 occurred at Berry Wood Asylum among non-residents of this district, so that deducting these we get only 59 deaths among residents in the district with a ratio per 1000 of 9·2. This is the smallest number of deaths during the last ten years, except for the years 1906 and 1907, when they were respectively 51 and 55. The average for the ten years is 68·8, with a ratio per 1000 of 12.

Table II. compares the births and deaths in the three sub-divisions of the district during the present year and during the last ten years. The births in the Weston Favell district were very few, only a little more than half the average of the last ten years. In the Duston district they were one over the average, and in the Kislingbury district they were also considerably below it. The deaths in the Weston Favell district were very few—only five—or less than half the average (12·5). In the Duston district they were the exact average of the last ten years, and in the Kislingbury district they were a trifle below the average.

Table III. shows the cases of infectious disease notified during the year. The total number was 44, which is rather high, as may be seen by the following table:—

1900	...	...	...	...	12 cases.
1901	...	...	...	...	22 „
1902	...	...	...	...	30 „
1903	...	...	...	...	21 „
1904	...	...	...	...	103 „
1905	...	...	...	...	76 „
1906	...	...	...	...	13 „
1907	...	...	...	...	16 „
1908	...	...	...	...	31 „
1909	...	...	...	...	44 „

Excluding, however, three cases of erysipelas, all the remaining ones were cases of scarlet fever and they include several cases in one family. It is very satisfactory, therefore, to find that no cases of the more severe infectious diseases—small pox, diphtheria, or enteric fever—have been notified this year in our district.

Of these cases of scarlet fever 10 were notified from Duston, and I think in every case we could distinctly trace them to people who either worked in the town of Northampton or to children who attended the town schools. Thirteen cases were notified in Weston Favell district. One case was that of a coachman who was constantly driving into the town, and fortunately no other cases occurred in his family. Three cases happened at Great Billing—the first being brought by a visitor who fell there with the malady during his visit. One case occurred at Weston Favell in a girl who was working at Mr. Manfield's factory in the town, and though there were many young children none of the others fell with the disease. The remaining eight cases occurred at Billing Arbours—a small hamlet of about six houses. All the children in these cottages contracted the disease evidently from attending the Moulton Schools in the Brixworth district, where the disease was so bad that the schools were closed for a time. The remaining 18 cases were notified in the Kislingbury district, and unfortunately one of these was fatal. Three of these happened at Kislingbury in one family, and seemed traceable to the drainage of the house, which was remedied at some considerable expense, with an immediate end to the disease. Two mild cases occurred at Harpole, but all the remainder were from Lower Heyford. These cases again were traceable to infection from the town. The first case occurred in a visitor from Far Cotton, and almost at the same time the disease appeared in the family of the town carrier, who was constantly backwards and forwards in the town. An attempt was made to check the disease by sending the first two cases to Daventry Fever Hospital, but unfortunately it was not successful. One other case gave us much concern, as her mother was daily expecting her confinement, so it was most imperative that she should be removed, but the Daventry people refused to take any more of our cases. Fortunately, we were able to persuade a woman who had cases of scarlet fever in her family to take the case in and nurse it with her's, which was a most happy ending of the case. On account of this epidemic the schools at Lower Heyford were closed from August 12th till after holidays.

There was one death reported from measles in the Kislingbury district, but considering that this malady was exceedingly prevalent in Northampton we have been singularly free from it in our district; I have heard of very few cases.

One death from erysipelas has been reported in the district and one from influenza, but the latter malady seems to have been very prevalent at Berry Wood Asylum, no less than seven deaths being attributed to it.

No deaths from diarrhoea either in children or adults have been registered.

Five deaths from different forms of tuberculosis have been registered and eleven at Berry Wood Asylum.

By desire of your Board I prepared a report on measures that should be taken to prevent the spread of tuberculous diseases in your district. After considering it the following measures were proposed to be taken, and I think they will be a great help in preventing the spread of this fatal disorder:—

- (1) That all cases of tubercular disease should be notified by Medical Practitioners to the Medical Officer of Health, and that they should receive the same fee as for notifying cases of infectious disease.
- (2) That the Registrars should be requested to at once inform the Medical Officer of Health of any deaths registered from tubercular disease in their district.
- (3) That the rooms, &c., used by patients dying from tubercular disease should be disinfected by the Sanitary Inspector immediately after the funeral.

The sewage schemes in the various villages where they have been installed have been kept in good working order during the year, and there have been no complaints. Now that the high ventilators have been erected at Duston there have been no nuisances arising from smells in this village, which was formerly frequently the case.

In the villages of Kissingbury, Lower Heyford, and Duston, where water supplies have been installed, they have been working satisfactorily during the year, and the supply of water has been good and wholesome. All the houses in Weston Favell from which complaints had been received have now been furnished with water from the town supply, so that this village is now also well served in this respect, and when necessary the supply can be extended.

During the year a new appointment of Sanitary Inspector has been made—Mr. Wilcox being appointed in the place of Mr. Wood. He has passed his examination as Inspector and also for the inspection of meat, so that we now have a regularly qualified Inspector. This change, however, makes it very difficult to fill up the form for Factory Inspection with any regard to accuracy, as I have not Mr. Wood's figures. As, however, there is only one small factory in the district, and the workshops are only small rooms where one or more of a family work, it seems to me to be almost a farce to require such a return from a Rural district. These workshops are regularly visited by the Sanitary Inspector, and we never find the least difficulty in getting them periodically limewashed or any other improvements made in them which we may suggest. As regards the slaughterhouses there are seven in the district, which are regularly visited, sometimes at the time of slaughtering, and they are all well drained and in good order. No tuberculous carcasses have been reported.

The Dairies are regularly inspected by the Sanitary Inspector, and any suggestions we make are at once acted on. No milk is sent to London, and we have experienced no difficulty in carrying out the Act. The cows, however, in this district have not been inspected by a Veterinary Surgeon, and no tuberculous animals have been discovered.

The Bakehouses are clean, and care is taken that they are kept whitewashed twice a year. There are no underground bakehouses.

Any cases of anthrax are notified to me by the Police. No cases of glanders or hydrophobia have been reported, and I much doubt if any exist.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

G. H. PERCIVAL, M.B.,

Medical Officer of Health.

